

Peter Thor, AFSCME
Testimony to General Administration and Election Committee
February 10, 2010

**Re: HB 5021 H.B. No. 5021 AA Implementing the Governor's Recommendations
Concerning the Citizens' Election Program and Raised Bill 5022 An Act Concerning
the Citizens' Election Program.**

Good morning Chairman Slossberg, Chairman Spallone and members of the GAE Committee. My name is Peter Thor. I am the Director for Policy and Planning for Council 4 AFSCME, a union of 35,000 public, nonprofit and private employees. I am here to speak in favor of passing a bill to amend and preserve Connecticut's campaign finance reform system.

Thank you for holding this hearing to address important proposals that address the challenge from the District Court ruling and potential challenge from the 2nd Circuit court. Both HB 5021 An Act Implementing the Governor's Recommendations Concerning the Citizens' Election Program and Raised Bill 5022 An Act Concerning the Citizens' Election Program go a long way to addressing the court challenges and the financial challenges facing the state.

The Rowland corruption scandals showed the disturbing relationship between a governor and his cronies receiving large campaign donations or gifts, and then seeming to award state and quasi-public contracts to those donors. Common Cause said it right: the trail of corruption begins on the campaign trail.

State taxpayers lost through contract deals more than \$200 million in the CRRRA/Enron scandal, \$57 million in the Connecticut Juvenile Training School debacle, another \$13 million in the Maximus child care mess, \$3 million in the Electronic Data Systems failure, and more than \$1 million in the CRRRA/MDC truck giveaway to the Manafort company that Attorney General Blumenthal just reported on. What do all of these scandals have in common? The privateer corporations involved gave big campaign donations to the Rowland administration prior to receiving the aforementioned contracts

A recent Zogby poll showed that 79 percent of Connecticut residents support the CEP. When asked if the state can't afford the CEP because of the state deficit, only 21

percent agreed while 68 percent want the CEP to help prevent the special deals that lobbyists and state contractors used to receive in exchange for political contributions. State taxpayers have already saved money by supporting publicly financing campaigns and decisions made by legislators elected without special interest money better represent Connecticut needs.

Our members are committed to protecting this system. I urge you and the General Assembly to work with the Governor to pass a bill that preserves the clean election system.

Thank you.